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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 002146

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/FO DAS CAMP, SCA/A  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG  
NSC FOR JWOOD  
OSD FOR SHIVERS  
CENTCOM FOR CG CSTC-A, CG CJTF-82 POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/14/2018

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SUBJECT: NGO SECURITY IN LIGHT OF ATTACK ON IRC STAFF

Classified By: Acting DCM James Van Laningham for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (U) On August 13, masked gunmen killed four employees of the International Rescue Committee: three female ex-patriates, including one American, and their male Afghan driver. Another Afghan colleague was injured but survived. According to the media, IRC, and UN contacts, the IRC group was traveling in two marked vehicles and were followed for a time before being attacked. Local Afghan television, TOLU TV, allegedly reported that prior to their vehicles passing, gunmen suddenly appeared in the nearby village and told villagers to stay inside. The villagers claimed not to know the gunmen.

¶2. (C) IRC has now suspended all operations in Afghanistan indefinitely, and CARE International, who worked with the murdered staffers on an education development consortium, has asked all staff to remain at home and not drive on the road where the attack took place. IRC President George Rupp and IRC senior management will arrive in Kabul tomorrow.

¶3. (C) The UN Country Team, led by SRSG Kai Eide, met today (August 14) and decided that, whether or not the attack was intentionally aimed at IRC or international NGOs, all UN road missions in the central provinces will be frozen for now. Eide will meet with IRC and international NGOs this afternoon and will ask UN headquarters to offer the NGOs whatever extra security the UN can provide, including air travel to project sites, if necessary.

¶4. (C) The evening of the incident, President Karzai sent Engineer Ibrahim, the Deputy Director of the Security Council, and General Nabillah, Karzai's head of security, to Logar province to oversee the investigation. UN contacts believe Karzai is very concerned about the potential political fallout from the attack.

¶5. (C) NGO contacts are mostly in shock at the events. Many knew the victims, and most are waiting to hear more about the attack before they make any major decisions about continuing operations. An IRC staff told post's Consular Chief that the work suspension was only temporary, and they would not let this event stop their humanitarian mission in Afghanistan. The group's official position, however, will not be known for several days, until the senior management assesses the results of the investigation and the continued risk.  
WOOD